

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2012

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Environment & Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica, Chairman Boxer, and Conferees,

We write to bring to your attention an important need in our Congressional Districts and across the country. As you work to negotiate a transportation bill between the House and Senate, we urge particular attention be paid to ensuring large Interstate projects can move forward with dedicated federal support. Projects like these have large national significance and can require the focused efforts of multiple agencies. For that reason we want to express our support for programs that support Interstate bridge projects in the Conference Report.

An example of an Interstate project that we have supported in a bipartisan fashion is the I-74 Bridge connecting Iowa and Illinois. In 2005 the I-74 Bridge became the most traveled bridge in the Quad Cities with an average of 77,800 vehicles crossing daily, despite the fact that it was built for 48,000 such crossings. The Bridge itself is functionally obsolete, however, and has never met Interstate standards. The much-needed replacement of the I-74 Bridge would not only create construction jobs, reduce traffic backups and aid commerce in traveling to and from our communities, but would – most importantly – improve safety for Americans traveling between Iowa and Illinois.

Our Iowa and Illinois Departments of Transportation have already committed significant funds to the design and pre-construction activities for this project and are ready to move on to construction in the near future but continue to face uncertainty over the status of federal support for such a large project. For this project and others like it to more quickly move forward, it is clear that Congress needs to produce a long-term transportation bill that includes programs for large Interstate bridge projects. Only by working together at all levels of government we will be able to fix our crumbling infrastructure.

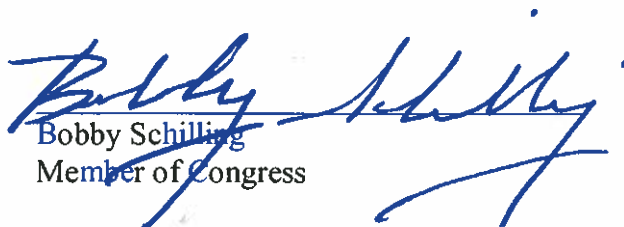
As we work to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression it is important to look at ways to maximize federal investments for the best economic output. Large Interstate bridge projects may be some of the most effective investments since they not only put a variety of people and skill-sets to work, but have broad public and private use and economic benefit for the long-term when completed. These projects are truly an investment in America's and each of our local communities' economies both today and for the future.

We know you understand the importance of transportation and infrastructure investments for our nation's continued growth, and again respectfully urge you to ensure that large multi-state projects can move forward by including support in the Conference Report. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



Bobby Schilling
Member of Congress